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## A PRACTICAL SPANISH VOCABULARY

In the teaching of Spanish one is often discouraged by the inability of the pupil, after two long years of faithful study, to express himself fluently or even with moderate ease in the Spanish language. The ideal way of learning a foreign language, of course, is to go to the country where it is spoken and learn it by using it and nothing else in one's daily life for a given period of time. But the great majority of American students can not avail themselves of this means of learning another language. Therefore, the teaching in the classroom in our high schools must be made more interesting and practical.

Spanish should be made a *living language* by using it as a means of communication and of expressing thoughts. If the interest of the student is not aroused, the teacher may work ever so hard and faithfully and yet the student will not progress as well as he would had his interest been awakened from the outset by the fact that he was learning a language that was really spoken by living people. From the very first day of school use Spanish phrases in class and require certain expressions in Spanish from the very beginning. A few minutes each day can be taken by the teacher to tell something in Spanish of vital interest to the students' daily life, early in the study of the language. It is surprising how their attention is held and how much they can understand when the subject is a familiar one. Toward the end of the first year and from then on, students can tell current events in Spanish, and they are delighted to show how well they can use the vocabulary at their command. They will look up new words and work hard and enthusiastically to prepare their topic. School events are always interesting, and the whole class will forget themselves and enter a discussion about some school activity, say a game, if presented in the right manner and if the teacher is alert and affords the necessary stimulus.

A familiar fairy tale told by the teacher can be retold by the pupils. The words they have forgotten may be supplied by some member of the class who has not forgotten them. Such stories as the Three Bears, the Dog and His Shadow, the Pied Piper of Hamelin, etc., can be used. As the subject matter is familiar, it is less difficult to understand. In this connection stories of Spanish and Spanish-American heroes may be introduced; also stories of the

Spanish *conquistadores*, which are of absorbing interest. In all our reading we always stop at historical allusions and remark about them in Spanish. At the end of two years the names of historical characters and of noted Spanish men of letters are familiar to the student, and he has not only gained a vocabulary, but information which makes him have a more sympathetic feeling for Spanish-speaking people and their life.

The majority of pupils enjoy learning the Spanish *coplas*, poems and songs. Many short poems may be memorized and may serve as the foundation for very interesting conversation periods. After the verse is well memorized let the different members of the class tell the story in their own words. A poem that lends itself admirably to this treatment is

#### EL ROMANCE DEL PRISIONERO

Por el mes era de mayo,	qué vivo en esta prisión,
cuando hace la calor,	que no sé cuando es de día
cuando canta la calandria	o cuando las noches son ;
y responde el ruiseñor,	sino por una avecilla
cuando los enamorados	que me cantaba al albor.
van a servir al amor ;	Matómela un ballestero,
sino yo triste cuitado	déle Dios mal galardón.

When the students know the historical setting of the poem, and about the life of Moorish prisoners, they are extremely interested in this poor prisoner who is missing the lovely May weather and whose only friend has been killed by some idle archer.

Singing has the added advantage over simple memorizing in that the correct stress must be given words. Many folk songs of Spain and Spanish America can be secured at a good music store. Try having your class memorize the words of a song and then sing it in class, and you will see how they enjoy it. Our students know many Spanish songs, although they memorize only a small number. These songs add interest to the Spanish parties and Spanish Club, if you have one. A universal favorite is

#### LA GOLONDRINA

¿Adónde irá veloz y fatigada  
 La golondrina que de aquí se va ?  
 ¡ Oh, si en el cielo se hallará extraviada  
 Buscando abrigo y no lo encontrará !  
 Junto a mi lecho le pondré su nido  
 En donde pueda la estación pasar.  
 También yo estoy en la región perdido  
 ¡ Oh, cielo santo, y sin poder volar !

Dejé también mi patria idolatrada,  
 Esa mansión que me miró nacer,  
 Mi vida es hoy errante y angustiada  
 Y ya no puedo a mi mansión volver.  
 ¡Ave querida, amada peregrina,  
 Mi corazón al tuyo estrecharé,  
 Oiré tu canto, tierna golondrina,  
 Recordaré mi patria y lloraré!

They like to hear the origin of the song; how the Moors were expelled from Spain and had to abandon their beautiful homes and could never return to them. They also observe with interest that the first letter of each line spells: "*Al objeto de mi amor.*"

At Christmas time they like to learn the Christmas songs with which they are familiar in English. Several of them have been translated into Spanish and are used in the Christmas celebrations in the Spanish-speaking countries; "Silent Night," for example.

#### NOCHE DE PAZ

Noche de paz, noche de amor,  
 Todo duerme en derredor,  
 Entre los astros que esparcen su luz,  
 Bella anunciando al niño Jesús,  
 Brilla la estrella de paz,  
 Brilla la estrella de paz.

Noche de paz, noche de amor.  
 En el campo al pastor,  
 Coros celestes proclaman salud,  
 Gracias y glorias en su plenitud,  
 Por nuestro buen Redentor,  
 Por nuestro buen Redentor.

Noche de paz, noche de amor.  
 Ved qué bello resplandor  
 Luce en el rostro del niño Jesús,  
 En el pesebre, del mundo la luz,  
 Astro de eterno fulgor.  
 Astro de eterno fulgor.

Another song of this season which has been translated is: "It Came Upon a Midnight Fair."

#### LA BELLA MEDIA NOCHE

La media noche quieta oyó  
 El cántico inmortal,  
 Que en las alturas proclamó  
 El coro angelical:  
 "Al hombre buena voluntad  
 Y a todo el mundo paz."  
 Y el orbe entero enmudeció  
 Oyendo la canción.

La misma voz angelical  
 También resuena hoy  
 Y da el mensaje celestial  
 Al mundo pecador;  
 Y sobre el campo y sobre el mar  
 O en el desierto cruel,  
 Glorioso y vívido el cantar  
 Escúchase doquier.

La edad de oro va a llegar  
 Y la de felicidad  
 En que los hombres se amarán  
 Y habrá en la tierra paz.  
 Entonces lleno de emoción  
 El mundo cantará:  
 "Al hombre buena voluntad  
 Y gloria a nuestro Dios."

A Christmas party, Mexican style, is always enjoyed by the students. We have the Christmas songs and, of course, a *piñata*, and the spirit of the occasion is beautiful. The pupils are glad to know how the Spanish-speaking people celebrate the season. The little song that is sung while the *piñata* is being broken is a great favorite.

## LA PIÑATA

## CORO:

En las noches de posadas  
 la piñata es lo mejor;  
 la niña más remilgada  
 se alborota con amor.

Dále, dále, dále,  
 no pierdas el tino,  
 mide la distancia  
 que hay en el camino.

Spanish parties and picnics are helpful in furnishing an opportunity for the practical use of the language. We have only typically Spanish numbers on the program, and always have a short play as part of the entertainment. These playlets are difficult to secure, as it is desirable that no single pupil be overtaxed with too many lines, and the lines must be full of life and action to aid the audience in understanding what is being said. Indeed, it has been necessary to write a good many of these, so as to have them within the limits of the understanding and capacity of amateurs. Tableaux representing some historical event, such as the return of Columbus to Spain or the Capture of Atahualpa, etc., are very interesting. One number which is effective is to have a Moor represented as behind the bars of a *reja*, having the auditorium dark and having a light shine into the cell from a high window. If the lights can be of several colors, the effect is even more pleasing. The Moor sings *La Golondrina*. Such plays as *Sábado sin sol*, by the Quintero brothers, and *No fumadores*, by Benavente, are practical. The plays are more interesting if they depict some simple every-day happening in a Spanish country.

Spanish games are very interesting and useful in our parties. Everyone can take part. Games requiring forfeits are good, as to redeem the forfeits the owner must speak or sing something in Spanish; or perhaps a little Spanish dance may be performed by someone who has taken that part in a previous program. The songs, *coplas*, and poems that have been memorized in class may be used to redeem the forfeits. Two or three games will serve as suggestions.

#### NO ES VERDAD

Each person playing is named after some fruit. Then the teacher says:

—¿Dónde estaba Ud., naranja?

*Naranja*—En casa de manzana.

*Manzana*—No es verdad.

*Naranja*—Pues, ¿dónde estaba Ud.?

*Manzana*—En casa de pera.

*Pera*—No es verdad.

*Manzana*—Pues, ¿dónde estaba Ud.?

*Pera*—En casa de toronja.

*Toronja*—No es verdad.

And so on indefinitely.

This game fixes in the mind several much-used phrases, and affords good drill in voice and sentence inflection. How much more interesting is a little game like this than the monotonous drill on a type-phrase without the association of a game. Yet it is much more effective.

For drill in the rapid use of numbers a useful game is *Zumba*. This is played like the game "Buzz" in English. The number for which *Zumba* (Buzz) is substituted may be varied.

#### LA DILIGENCIA

This game may be played for forfeits; any one failing to rise at the proper time, giving a forfeit. Name each person one of the following words: el cochero, la mula (at least four of these), la rueda (four of these), el látigo, el pasajero (as many as desired), la ventanilla, el equipaje, la puerta, el camino real, el arroyo, los ladrones (several of these), la pistola, la mordaza, el precipicio, la escolta (several soldiers), el herido, etc.

These can be as numerous as you wish to make them. The teacher or someone else who is fluent in the use of Spanish can tell a story of a trip in a diligence, and every time one of these words is mentioned the player rises, turns around, and sits down again. When

the story-teller says, "*Se volcó la diligencia*," all rise and change places. If you have never had an eventful ride in an old diligence your imagination will prove a useful assistant. Many other games can be played and are a source of enjoyment to those in attendance at the party.

It is to be hoped that in the near future Spanish will be generally taught in such a way that not only the teachers, but the pupils also may feel the beauty of the sweet, melodious Spanish language, so charmingly expressed in the following lines:

#### A LA LENGUA CASTELLANA

Claro y límpido raudal  
es la lengua que yo adoro,  
la lengua de versos de oro  
y de vibración marcial.

Es dúctil como el metal  
y rica como el tesoro  
que dejó Boabdil el moro  
allá en su Alhambra oriental.

Cómo clarines al viento,  
vibra su bronceo acento  
en la ira o el dolor.

Y sus cláusulas graves,  
amorosos trinos de aves  
sobre las lilas en flor.

—*Leopoldo Díaz*

EDITH SALMANS

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